

Application No. 09/749,005
Amendment B dated October 13, 2003
Reply to Office Action of June 12, 2003

REMARKS

In the Final Office Action dated June 12, 2003, claims 1-11, 13, 15-17, 24-27 and 22-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Birrell (U.S. Patent no. 6,029,164) in view of Gilmour (U.S. Patent no. 6,115,709). By this paper, claims 1, 5-7, 11, and 37 have been amended and claim 15 has been cancelled.¹ Accordingly, claims 1-11, 13, 16-17, 24-27 and 33-37 remain pending. Of these claims, claims 1, 11 and 37 are the only independent claims at issue. Claims 1 and 11 are related method claims and claim 37 is a corresponding computer program product claim.

The pending claims are generally directed to performing searches for documents in data stores and more particularly to scoping the searches in order to identify and return desired subsets of objects that are contained within one or more folders of the data stores and without having to access the corresponding property store to determine where the data objects are located.

As described in the specification, a significant disadvantage of current search techniques for identifying objects that are stored in a data store is that extra processing time is often required to identify which of the objects that are returned from search are located within the relevant mailbox or other location corresponding to a user. (Page 3, lines 17-18) In particular, related prior art searching requires access not only to a content index of the documents or data objects, but also requires access to a property store to identify the particular locations or folders where the data objects are located. (Page 8, lines 17-18) Accordingly, a search with prior art techniques can be a somewhat lengthy task, particularly when searching for documents within a specific folder because the document properties must be accessed to identify which folder each of the queried documents are in to make sure they correspond to the appropriate location. (page 14, line 17 thru page 15, lines 7)

The present invention overcomes some of the foregoing problems by including scope restrictions, such as folder identifiers, within the content index, that are implicitly added to search queries, as recited in the claims, so that the property store does not have to be accessed

¹ It will be appreciated that the changes made to the claims by this paper should not be construed as acquiescing in the purported prior art status of Birrell or Gilmour under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(a)/(e). Accordingly, Applicants reserve the right at any time, as deemed necessary or appropriate by Applicants, to challenge the purported prior art status of Gilmour and Birrell.

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during the search to identify the folders where the data objects are located. (page 18, line 3 thru page 19, line 15). This is also reflected more apparently in the amended claims.

For at least the reasons described herein, the cited art fails to anticipate or obviate the claimed invention, either singly or in combination. In particular, Birrell and Gilmour fail to teach, suggest or motivate the indexing of unique folder identifiers in the content index (claim 1) or the indexing of one or more scope restrictions in the content index that identify one or more folders where data objects are located (claims 11 and 37). This is particularly true when considering the scope restrictions are non-textual, as recited in claims 11 and 37.

In fact, Birrell actually appears to teach away from such embodiments. In particular, Birrell teaches of a method for retrieving messages through full-text queries in which the query searches for messages that match words and labels (in which the labels are described as textual). (Col. 9, ll. 28-58). Birrell also teaches away from organizing messages into folders at all. (Col. 10, lines 1-7). In particular, Birrell states that "named queries can be viewed as a way for replacing prior art subject folders." *Id.* Accordingly, it will be appreciated that there would be no motivation to include folder identifiers with the search terms if the data objects being searched for were not even organized within folders.

Gilmour, on the other hand, is cited by the Examiner as purportedly teaching that a second list of document identifiers is compared to a first list of document identifier to identify a subset of document identifiers that appear in both the first and second lists, such that the subset of document identifiers can be returned without having to access the property store. (OA page 3). However, even assuming, *arguendo*, that Gilmour does teach that two lists can be compared to obtain a desired search result, in a general sense, Gilmour fails to anticipate or obviate the claim element of comparing two lists that are obtained from a content index, wherein the second list is identified through the use of folder identifiers, as recited in the claims. Gilmour also fails to teach the other claim elements recited in the claims, for at least the reasons articulated in the previous response.

In particular, the method disclosed in Gilmour includes intercepting electronic documents that are generated and transmitted by users within the organization so that the terms of the documents can be extracted to construct user knowledge profiles. Col. 4, 62-67. "The identified terms are then compared to a number of user knowledge profiles with a view to detecting a predetermined degree of correspondence between the identified terms and any one of more of the

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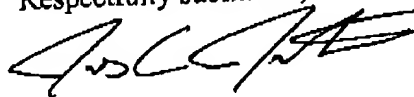
user knowledge profiles." Col. 5, ll. 41-45. "This aspect...is advantageous in that a sender of an e-mail message is presented with a list of proposed recipients, identified according to their knowledge profiles and the content of the e-mail message, who may be interested in receiving the e-mail message. Accordingly, the problems of over-distribution and under-distribution of e-mail messages may be encountered within an organization may be reduced." Col. 5, ll. 58-65.

In contrast, to the present invention, Gilmour is directed at teaching a method and system for constructing knowledge profiles of users with unrestricted and restricted access portions according to respective levels of confidence of content to help determine which third parties will have access to the content. (Abstract). Accordingly, Gilmour fails, singly or in combination with Birrell, to disclose methods in which one or more identifiers/scope restrictors are added to a content index as it is built and altered, and in which two separate lists are identified, by using search terms and the identifiers/scope restrictors, and wherein the lists are compared to generate a subset of document identifiers that can be returned to a user without having to first access the property store of the corresponding system, as claimed.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims (1-11, 13, 16-17, 24-27 and 33-37) are now in condition for allowance. In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 13 day of October 2003.

Respectfully submitted,



RICK D. NYDEGGER
Registration No. 28,651
JENS C. JENKINS
Registration No. 44,803
Attorneys for Applicant

Customer No. 022913

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